

THE RHYMING GUIDE TO GRENFELL BRITAIN

Potent Whisper



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POTENT WHISPER

Illustrated by

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First published in London, 2018 by Dog Section Press
Printed by Calverts Ltd., a workers' cooperative

ISBN 9780993543555

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Layout by Matt Bonner - revoltdesign.org
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PREFACE

This book is dedicated to all victims of the Grenfell Tower fire.

On 14th June 2017, Grenfell Tower went up in flames causing the deaths of at least 71 people. Most were burnt alive, with some jumping to their deaths in an attempt to escape the fire. This incident has been described as many things: horrific, disastrous, tragic. But one thing it cannot be described as is an accident. In fact, it was mass murder.

In years leading up to the fire the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation, who were responsible for the tower, received countless warnings from the resident-led Grenfell Action Group, along with professional experts, about safety risks at the tower. Residents were ignored, before being threatened with legal action for expressing concerns for their safety. The fire was indeed a tragedy but any insinuation that it was an accident should be met by the fact that informed decisions were made by the TMO to ignore the desperate warnings they had received from residents. The deaths at Grenfell were forewarned, preventable and, therefore, deliberate. That these deaths were chosen makes Grenfell an emblematic embodiment of all that is wrong with Britain, particularly in relation to its delivery of the austerity agenda.

Austerity, the big word that we are taught so little about, has destroyed the core pillars of British society and taken the lives of untold people in the process. We have felt its effects through the demolition of the welfare state; the genocide of poor and disabled people stripped of their benefits; the privatisation of vital public services; the sale of public land and council housing; gentrification; the closure of libraries, youth clubs and fire stations. The men hailed as the architects of austerity, David Cameron and George Osborne, assured us that “we are all in this together”. But these are empty words when every day millions of normal people wake up to face the violent effects of a choice made and upheld by those who will never have to suffer its consequences. In this anti-gravity society where the trickle down only ever flows up, it seems to me that we are experiencing what can only be described as political and economic warfare. But, as the saying goes: “They only call it class war when we fight back”.

Perhaps the greatest attack on the British public is the lack of information and false information being provided by the mainstream media. Given that we live in a supposed representative democracy where we lend our power to politicians to represent us, the media are one of the few institutions that we rely on to hold our representatives to account through unbiased, accurate reporting. The media’s overwhelming and arguably deliberate failure to achieve this allows our representatives to abuse their

power and literally get away with murder. The British public cannot and will not defend themselves unless they first come to realise they are being attacked.

I use Spoken Word to break down key socio-political issues in a way that I hope is engaging, informative and entertaining. I use everyday language to dismantle (and offer radical solutions to) key issues that are typically either misrepresented by the media or abstracted beyond comprehension by academically elitist political rhetoric that most of us were never taught. The aim of this work is to make important information accessible by translating it through rhyme and delivering it in a way that people want to listen to. If you would like to hear this Spoken Word collection read aloud, you can search for the titles on YouTube, where they’re freely available.

Imagine there was a lion that you could not see, about to attack you. Imagine that a friend shouts to warn you, but speaks in a language foreign to you. You don’t understand their warning and you get eaten. Academics are that well-meaning friend; consider me your translator.



Potent Whisper

April 2018

THE RHYMING GUIDE TO NHS PRIVATISATION



Great Britain! Great... Britain...

It's quite a big statement to call a country great

Like, to actually have the word great in the
country's name

And over the past few years, especially of late

Many of us are questioning what makes this
country great

I guess we've got a strong economy. Tell that to the
working class...

We've got democracy. Though none of us wanted to
bomb Iraq...

We've got honest policies. While families are left
to starve...

We've got a monarchy! Hahaha come on you have
to laugh...

We were quite a nation, with social stability

We had free education, before the new tuition fees

We did things efficiently, we ran self-sufficiently

We had a strong pound and a proud wealth of industries

We had -

British Steel, British Rail

British Gas, Royal Mail

A whole coal industry, before they aborted that

We had social welfare, before George snorted that...

We were multicultural, before we had the brexit vote

Housing was affordable, before we saw the rents explode

We had social housing, before the Tories smashed it down

We had Human Rights and stuff... but they're all being retracted now

So I'm sure you'll appreciate that especially of late

Many of us are questioning what makes this country 'great'

But despite any divisions or difference of opinions

We'll all agree that Britain has a great health system

Your NHS is something to be proud of

The crown of the country, something you count on

It's the most socialist system you could think up

Where access to health care isn't based on income

It's publicly owned, it's publicly funded

It doesn't bow to capital, or listen to the voice of greed

The public all know this and that's why it's trusted

It doesn't matter who you are, it's free at the point of need

And we all need it.

I mean, take a second to think about the people in your life

Who have had to use the NHS or else they would have died

In fact, without the NHS and all that it provides

How many of you would even be here today, alive?

Britain's got the best health service in the world

And the Commonwealth Fund said we're number one as well

So I wonder to myself, what you would do if I showed you a very different angle?

A very different picture of the biggest type of scandal

What would you do if I said the NHS is being cancelled

Stabbed and strangled, smashed and dismantled?!

Now I do realize that might sound strange
 After all, on the surface it seems like nothing's changed
 Your hospital's still there, your doctor's still the same
 But deep beneath the surface, it's all been re-arranged

This is the reality, and if you feel to listen
 I'll try to break it down for you. I'll start from
 the beginning

So we all go to work, we work hard and pay tax
 Our tax is what makes up the government's budget
 The budget is what funds the NHS cash
 But the Tories in Britain are cutting all the funding

So when we need to build new hospitals,
 equipment and beds
 Apparently we can't because of deficit and debt
 Which, for anyone who knows about austerity and theft
 Means they starve your NHS and give your tax to
 banks instead

So, the Private Finance Initiative was introduced
 Also known as PFI, going back to '92
 This is when the government bring a private group in
 To fund our public infrastructure, hospitals included

Private groups have big cheques and they're more than
 happy to invest

Cos when they get their money back, we pay a lot
 of interest

PFI consortiums are robbing us as we speak

St. Bartholomew's pays 2 million a week... in interest!

And PFI have built a hundred hospitals in total

And this is one of the reasons why people are so vocal

Cos if we'd built them publicly, we'd pay 11 billion

But now through PFI, we'll pay a tenth of a trillion

With this colossal loss of wealth, plus the government
 cuts to funding

It's easy to see how the NHS is crumbling

But by far, without a doubt, the biggest threat to health

Is the *Health and Social Care Act of 2012*

Now the Act itself is over 400 pages

So me trying to break it down would take flippin ages

But I know you love the NHS and really wanna save it

So I'll say this in a way that's most easy to explain it

For 60 years and more, since 1948

Your NHS was real cause to call this country great

The secretary of state has had a legal obligation
 To provide healthcare for the entire population

But the Health and Social Care Act devolves responsibility
 It abdicates the government from NHS delivery
 So services become run by Clinical Commissioners
 (Who are private companies,
 and not health practitioners)

The act in fact enables them to open up a market
 Healthcare was free before but now we're the bargain
 You become a target, and you can fight your hardest
 But this legislation is the nail in your casket

You'll be forced from social welfare,
 into the jaws of private healthcare

And we all know what that means. I mean...

As a director of a company, there's only one objective
 Only one perspective, only one directive
 Profit, and lots of it, however you've got to get it
 And once you've gone and got it then it needs to
 be protected
 So if they sell insurance then they'll start to get selective

They'll turn away the sickest cos you're not a
 good investment

The poor who can't afford to get insurance get rejected
 We die, and you and I are forced to just accept it

That's what's gonna happen here, it's not an empty threat
 If you're not upper class, or rich,
 then you'll be left for dead

But they demonise your doctors, over-work your nurses
 Under-fund your hospitals and over-burn the service
 It's actively happening, they're doing it on purpose
 They're doing it just to try and justify their murders

But I say stand with the workers, cos they stand with you
 Family it's true, they're battling for you
 When they fight - it's for you
 When they strike - it's for you
 If they don't sign a contract, that is for you!

This is your future, this is your fight
 This is your healthcare, this is your life
 This is your duty, this is your test
 This is your war, this is your NHS.



THE RHYMING GUIDE TO AUSTERITY

I wanna talk about money...

Dough, paper, moolah, dollar

Bread, cheddar, lolly, wonga

P's, cheese, dosh, fast stacks

Benjamin, capital, gwap, hard cash

They say money makes the world go round,
and they're right

Whether you like it or not it's true,
money rules our lives

Everybody lives for it! Cos if we don't we die...

I do overtime on overtime and just about survive

How can people work so hard and still not
be surviving?

The fact that I still live in London, is surprising

All of us know what life is like,

the cost of living's rising
Even with a 9-5 our wages aren't sufficing

And then we gotta pay tax...

You got direct tax, indirect tax
Alcohol tax, cigarette tax
Income tax, VAT
National Insurance, CGT

(That's gains on capital tax)
Local tax, national tax
Global tax, climatical tax
I'm shocked we ain't got taxable tax!

You pay stamp duty, fuel duty
Business rates, Council tax
Import, export, customs duty
Tax on property, inheritance tax

They tax us on the road and they tax us in the sky
They tax us when we travel,
when we drive and when we fly
We all pay tax on almost everything we buy

They tax us when we're born and
they tax us when we die

All I'm tryina say is that we pay a lot of tax!

Now no-one likes paying tax, it's not exactly fun
But I guess without it, our country wouldn't run
Taxation is the way we pay for services and welfare
Police, firefighters, benefits, health care

Tax is paid by the public and it's spent on the public
Well, that was until austerity was introduced and f*cked it

Now, when I say the word austerity some people
get confused

They've heard the word before cos they heard it
on the news

But it's hard to understand in depth,
it's kinda complicated

They understand a bit but no one's ever just explained it

What is austerity? Why did we choose it?
How does it affect me? Is it an improvement?
Is it really working? Have they ever proved it?
Do we really want it? Why do we still do it?

These are the questions that I'll address below
 Cos austerity affects you all and you deserve to know

So picture this...

There's 90 trillion dollars on the planet
 Billions are given to investors to manage
 They've always looked for markets that are calm with
 little risk

And they decided housing is where they'd put their chips

So investors gave mortgages to people who could
 pay them

They made a lot of money, the market was amazing
 But then they got greedy through the new deregulations
 And started giving mortgages to anyone who craved them
 (These were called "Sub-prime mortgages")

The investors didn't care if people couldn't pay their
 mortgage off

Cos the housing market was perhaps the most secure
 there was

If people miss their payments then their houses just
 get repossessed

And then the bank can sell them off and so the bank's
 not left with debt

So investors gave mortgages they knew that people
 couldn't pay

Cos they could always profit from the houses they
 would take away

But millions of people lost their homes, which
 surprised the banks

Housing supply surpassed demand and so house
 prices crashed

Suddenly, every bank, government and company
 Involved in these mortgages all faced redundancy
 They were all billions of pounds in the minus
 And they called it the Global Financial Crisis

In a nutshell, everyone was screwed
 Fucking them. Fucking us. Fucking me. Fucking you.
 People around the world just couldn't believe the news
 But luckily our leaders knew just what to do

They said it was a crisis of a global scale
 They said we had to help the banks, they're too big to fail
 That if we didn't save them, the economy would cave in
 So we bailed out the banks, instead of sending them
 to jail...

Now you might be wondering how much we paid to
 save them
 How much we lent them, how much we gave them
 Well in the UK we paid 500 billion
 And some reports say it was up to a trillion

After the bailout we were in a mess
 Our deficit was huge (the deficit's our countries debt)
 We had to make a move to produce money fast
 And stimulate an economic growth we hoped would last

We dreamed of prosperity, we needed a remedy
 And our government decided that the answer was austerity

In other words:

Remember all that tax that you worked so hard to
 give them?
 Well they used that money to pay the country's debt
 So our country had less money left to fund the
 public system
 Plus they privatised services til there was nothing left

So basically, they fed us shit and us lot swallowed it
 The banks got paid and we got the following:

Cuts to local government: over 12 billion
 500,000 council workers lost their jobs
 Cuts to universities - 800 million
 With rising fees leaving uni students at a loss

Cuts to youth services - 300 million
 60 mil cut from the budget for our parks
 Cuts to infrastructure worth 15 billion
 Cuts to adult social care: 3 and a half

52% cut from education
 Thousands more homeless people on the pavement
 15,000 beds cut for NHS patients
 These are real statistics not speculation

They shut 343 libraries
 64 museums, 3000 bus routes
 380 care home companies
 3000 mental health workers have been cut too

200 playgrounds - shut
 350 youth clubs - shut
 Connexions - shut

Leisure centres - shut
Over 600 SureStart centres - shut

Cuts to our NHS... forty billion
Over 60 hospitals and trusts are facing closure
Health and social care cuts alone are killing citizens
120,000 deaths and over

But these are just figures
And we are not figures
We are real people, with feelings, ambitions
We're the people who live with the results of
their decisions
We're parents, we're children, we're brothers,
we're sisters

We're the people who starve to death
because they've been sanctioned
We're the elderly who die at home,
freezing and abandoned

We're the thousands of disabled people buried in the earth
Cos they killed themselves after being told they're "fit
for work"

We're the sons who read the suicide notes left behind
We're the daughters of the 80,000 claimants left to die

We're the nurses, the workers, the lonely, the homeless
The everyday person; the broken, the hopeless
What exactly has to happen before we reverse this?
How may have to die before we say that it's not working?
It's harmful. And it makes no economic sense
If you want growth, you don't cut, you spend

When they cut public spending and raise our taxes
We have less money, so we spend less on average
We buy less products and purchase less services
So companies produce less and need less workers in

People lose their jobs, unemployment goes up
So we pay less tax cos we're earning less funds
Income tax revenue drops in huge measurement
(Plus they spend more on JSA and state benefits)

People ask why there's no money in the country
Well one reason there's no money in the country
Is big corporations make money in the country
Don't pay tax on it and move it out the country

The rich getting richer won't put money in the country
 Cutting deficit won't put money in the country
 If the government doesn't put money in the country
 There won't be any money in the country

Ultimately, there's just one thing you need to know
 You gotta spend money to make money
 And that's why Britain's broke

We've suffered 10 years of these devastating policies
 They've killed hundreds of thousands and damaged
 the economy
 But I'm not trying to be right, I don't want apologies
 I just want arrests and the future that they promised me

Cos when they cut our funds, they cut our throats
 They cut our help, they cut our hope
 They cut us deep, they cut we bleed
 They cut us then they cut and go

They cut to bone, they cut our cash
 They cut our necks and fed the banks
 Don't cut 'em slack, cut 'em back!
 They cut our rope. They let us hang

It's them who cut your sons' wrist
 They cut short your daughters' life
 They cut us every day, in every way we live our little lives

 They're spilling our blood, they're killing our mums
 They cut us all, they started war
 But if they wanna cut we'll build an army on the scars
 that form.



TRIDENT ON TRIAL

I'd like to invite Trident into the conversation
It's not a complicated issue and it's quite the obligation

Trident is Britain's nuclear weapons system
Four submarines under sea, with a mission...

Apparently Trident is "The minimum effective nuclear
deterrent to deter the most extreme threat"
But let's take a second to break that sentence down in
these steps:

Step 1. The minimum effective nuclear deterrent:
Well consider this: a single submarine contains eight
missiles, comprised of 5 warheads in each
Each five comprised of 100 kilotons, giving us forty
warheads at least
Times the 100kt of high explosives, not to bring price
to light for the time being
Equating, you might not have noted, to hundreds of
Hiroshima's under sea

All of this power to deter an attack, when it isn't even
threatened and it's likelihood is jack
But that isn't my opinion, I'm just running with the facts
I'll only quote directly from the government's stats

Step 2. To deter the most extreme threat:
The threat of state on state nuclear warfare is outdated
And according to their last report it's been downgraded
Apparently the major threats are terrorism and
cyber attacks
(I'm gonna get to terror but today I ain't got time for that)

So if we've identified the threats in cyberspace and terror
With nuclear warfare being low on their agenda
How can we possibly justify Tridents' need
Or its fees, especially now when austerity is peak?

But here's the situation: Trident needs to be renewed
It's gonna cost £200 billion and now they're looking at you!

*"Hello, listen citizen, we've reviewed your circumstance
And we can see you're struggling even though you're working hard
But we're going to cut your benefits, you'll all get hit hard
Because well... your benefits could benefit our war, death and arms*

*If you can't afford your bills, you'll just have to freeze
If you can't pay your rent, you'll just have to leave
When they get hungry, your children will have to cry
When mummy "feels funny", she'll just have to die!"*

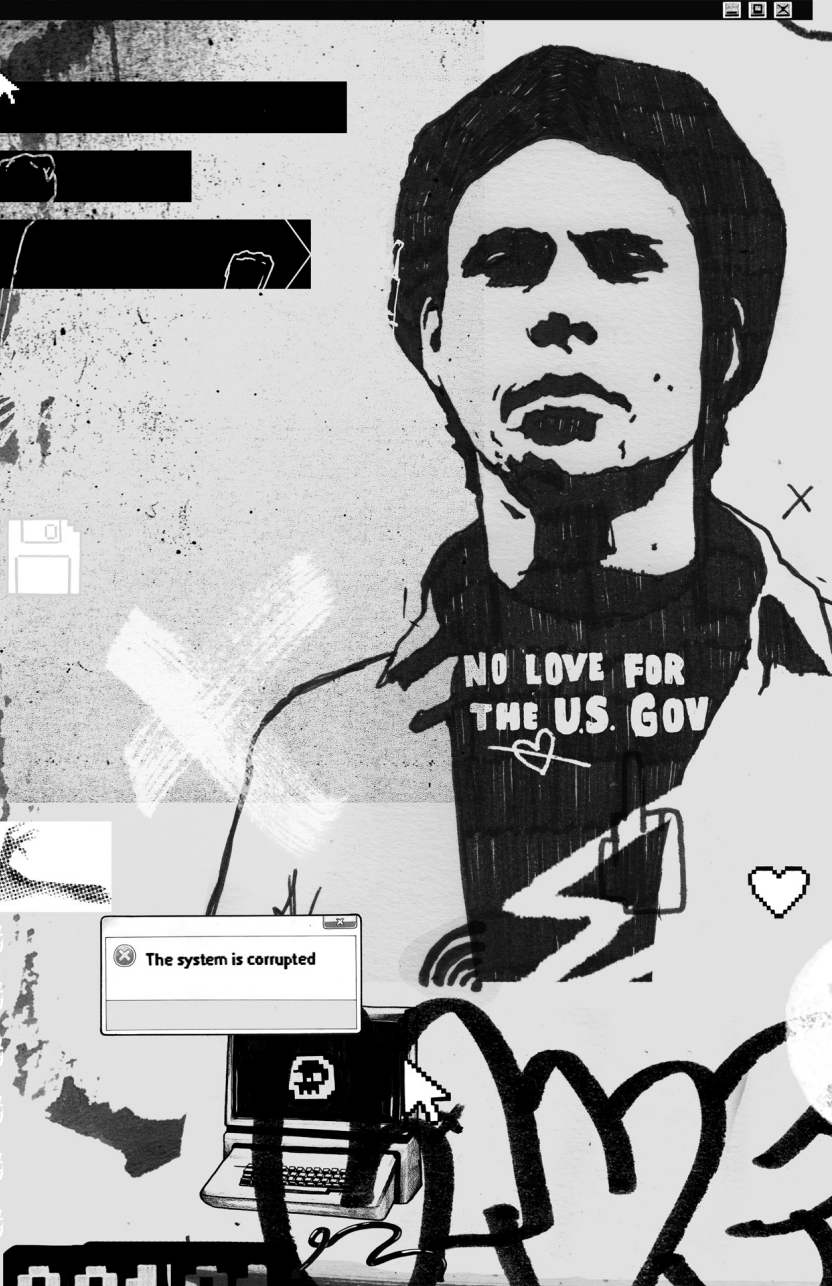
That's the reality. It's ugly. They're trying it
They feed the facts with fallacy but trust me I ain't
buying it
I'm saying no to Trident and yes to public services
No to George and other white collar office murderers

You wanna try something? Try and question Trident
Try and question whether it leads to peace, or
only violence
Try and put your false fears aside to lie in silence
Try and invest money into lives instead of Trident

Try jobs, try housing, try education
Try welfare, not warfare. Try health and elevation

Try choosing people, and try to do it sooner
Put Trident on trial and try choosing a future.

Scrap Trident.



THE RHYMING GUIDE TO LAURI LOVE

As children, we were told glorious stories
Of giants and legends and heroes and glory
Stories of dragons and magical powers
We'd listen and wish that the stories were ours

But all the best stories are ones that are true
And some of those children became heroes too
So I'll tell you a story they'll tell in the future
And you could be part of the cast if you choose

This is a true story of hackers and rebels
Anonymous angels and danger and devils
Of kidnap and robbery, dungeons, heroes
Modern technology, ones and zeros

This is a story you couldn't make up
Of one man versus the USA Gov
One man they're literally trying to abduct

This is the story of a man named Love

Lauri Love is a man known for hacking

Hacking's a modern day version of magic

But when I say "hacker" most people panic

They associate hacking with crime and damage

People imagine them as password reading

Hooded, attacking, bank account thieving, crooked,
scamming, anonymous, cheating, sneaking enemies
generally stealing

And in some cases, that's all true

I've been a victim, I know it's the truth

These are the things that some hackers do

But there's also good hackers too

Hacking is a skill, which can have many uses

Depending on the person who chooses to use it

It's like martial arts, in many respects

You can use it to attack, or you can use it to defend

And there's a lot of hackers who use their skills for good

They know that they can and they feel that they should

So they fight for human rights and risk their lives for
the cause

And one of those hackers was called Aaron Swartz

Aaron was a kind and talented man

He achieved so much and had even bigger plans

He had the whole world in the palm of his hands

But Aaron wanted everyone to have what he had

One day, Aaron copied some science from an
academic archive

He believed that education shouldn't have a set price

But Aaron got caught and he was punished by
the system

With 13 charges and up to 50 years in prison

Now, Aaron copied science. No one got harmed at all

Why should the state view the case as one
that's chargeable?

50 years in prison for that is almost farcical

If Aaron hadn't killed himself... it might be laughable

In 2013 Aaron Swartz hanged himself

Only 26 years old, so he was young as well

That potential punishment scared him to death
 50 years inside didn't reflect the crime alleged
 Naturally his family wanted him avenged
 And hackers around the world then exacted their revenge

A group called Anonymous attacked the
 guilty government
 They hacked every one their major websites, every one
 of them
 The US Army, the Federal Reserve, NASA, the FBI
 Their pride was hurt

America was livid, this wouldn't be forgiven
 The Government wanted blood or at least
 someone in prison
 But they didn't know who did it, so they chose a name...
 in Britain...
 And the US Gov decided Love would be their victim

In 2013 at his family address,
 undercover agents made Love's arrest
 They seized his equipment and took him to the station
 where NCA agents began the investigation

But 9 months later, the police had no developments

They stopped investigating him, they'd gathered
 no intelligence
 It might have been a test for them but none of them
 were negligent
 They never took it further cos there wasn't any evidence

So Love returned home to continue with his life
 It was hard but he started to recover from the trauma
 But one year later the police then decide they'll arrest
 him again, on America's orders

Love was told that he faced extradition
 This means the US wanted to steal him from Britain
 Bring him to America to face their justice system
 Where Love would face up to 99 years in prison

Now this, for many reasons, is a dangerous situation
 Dangerous for Love and for us as a nation
 There's lot's of different angles and many implications
 So I'm gonna break it down cos this deserves
 consideration

Now first of all
 Why should Love be sentenced in the USA when the
 crime allegedly took place in the UK?

They can use the Treaty, if the crime was committed there
But they say it wasn't, so how is extradition fair?

Lauri Love's British, he's been investigated here
The UK police said that he was in the clear
Now all of a sudden they wanna make him disappear
(Without any evidence)
And they think that we'll just... cheer?

I mean, Trump's over there saying our system
isn't adequate
And Amber Rudd is just lapping it up and having it!

It's like, what ever happened to your Brexit Britain?
Where you decide what happens, where you make
the decisions
You rejected Europe and their courts' authority
But then you let America smash your British sovereignty!

It's like they tell us what to do and we just submit to them
Why should Love be tried there? The whole
thing's ridiculous
I reject American authority in Britain
I believe in British justice for British citizens

Their justice is political, ask any American
It's a fact, their judges are chosen by the president
Our judiciary is fully independent
We don't deal with politics, our system deals
with precedent

Now in this case a precedent has already been set
By Theresa May, a name you wouldn't expect
She opposes extradition and opts for British judges
Whenever it's clearly in the interest of justice
(This is called the 'Forum Bar')

So the one main question we all have to ask
Is whether extradition can be a just demand
If Love was sent there would justice really come to pass?
Or would justice better function under UK command?

Now the first thing to consider is Love's mental
health condition
Love has depression and Asperger's Syndrome
Their mental health care wouldn't be adequate or fair
So love would be at high risk if he went to prison there

And he would - end up in prison
 He wouldn't get bail, he'd go straight to prison
 The US routinely denies hackers bail
 So he'd have to fight his case from the confines of jail

That means limited phone and internet time
 Which means a limited ability to fight
 How would he defend himself without proper access to
 evidence and everything that's crucial to his rights?

And bare in mind, it wasn't just one case they threw at him
 There's three jurisdictions who are all are pursuing him
 It could take years for him to win one defence
 And then he'd have another two, so he'd have to
 start again

It would never end. That's if he gets the trials
 We should all be honest, we're never gonna see them
 The truth is, he'll never stand trial in the US
 And that is for definite, for one of two reasons:

1 - the plea bargain

How can I explain this...

You know in the movies, when they're in the courthouse

The judge, the jury, the defendant, the full crowd
 There's a full trial and you can see the whole show
 But with a plea bargain, this is how it goes:

"You're looking at 100 years in prison. Are you guilty?"
 You know you're not guilty, so you say "I'm not"
 "Well, we'll only give you 20 if you say that you're guilty"
 So you say you're guilty cos that difference is a lot!

That's a plea bargain.

So then, there's no trial. The jury's never sent for
 You never get the chance to present your defence in court
 The alleged victim never has to prove your guilt
 And you go to jail for milk you never spilled

Now the other reason Love would never get a trial
 Is because he'd kill himself before he goes a single mile
 Love would take his own life before any extradition
 And I think I'd do the same facing 99 in prison
 In America, with Asperger's syndrome
 Against their government, who runs their legal system
 Three separate cases in three jurisdictions

The whole world is watching, they need your
conviction...

Love would kill himself.

And for what? What was the crime? Was it a crime
without a victim?

Did Love commit a crime? What evidence was given?

Should someone be imprisoned when they haven't
been convicted?

Isn't someone innocent until it's proved they did it?

Let Love defend himself, give the man his day in court

In the same country that he lives in, where he was born

Then if it turns out that he did what you thought

Then of course, he should be punished in accordance
with the law

Love's just another normal member of the public

He's never said he shouldn't be tried in front of judges

If anyone implies otherwise they're talking rubbish

What he's asking for is the process of justice

This isn't just about Love, it's about our system

It's about sovereignty and British jurisdiction

It's about the forum bar and future extraditions

It's about the truth and due process in Britain

So if they think they're gonna break him,
they're mistaken

If they wanna come, the whole of Britain will
be waiting

Hundreds could literally physically blockade him

Screw the US government

They're never gonna take him

No Love 4 US Gov.

The end.

NOTHING IS NOTHING

The black emptiness of nothing; endlessly empty from
any but nothing

Nothing but emptiness, endless in nothingness

Nothing is anything. Nothing is nothing

The inevitable dead end at the end of every road and
every trail of thought with which you once roamed. A
relentless cry. Screaming. Silently. Sparing their ears but
eating you violently. Numbly.

The heaviest shadow that no light can fade

Eyes that only reflect the light that just about finds them

An answer that no question can change

It lingers... it's final... it's timeless

Forgotten urges and purposes

An ever muted mouth, and mind

You feel your sound fading in the rain that drowns
your life

POTENT WHISPER

The stillness where your heart used to beat
Laughter in the distance, too far to reach

So now, the black emptiness of nothing; endlessly
empty from any but nothing

Nothing but emptiness, endless in nothingness

Nothing is anything. Nothing is nothing.



SAVE BRIXTON ARCHES

I wanna talk about the Brixton Arches

That's the reason that I'm speaking and one of the reasons we've been marching

We all wanna put Brixton first

But to do that, it's true that we must define Brixton first

So what is Brixton?

Well one could argue that a place can be defined

On one of the following bases (I'll make this concise)

They say a place can be defined by its physical circumference

By the structures that sit in it and their specific functions

By linguistic statistic, by its rate of consumption

By its economic state and, basically,
by using numbers...

But of course, we understand that it's the faces that
make it

The array of shapes and flavours, the neighbours you
were raised with

Many would describe this as the tight knit community
Who raised us and gave us the good life we grew to meet

Brixton's been a champion for multi-culture, multi-ethnic
Multi-story blocks full of stories that are multi-centric...

So many stories. And it's important to remark
That one of these stories is yours, but all of these
stories are ours
This is our Brixton

Now in recent years, in our Brixton, there's been a lot
of changes

The prices have shot up but not enough in wages
Our closest mates and neighbours have been replaced
by strangers
And we're all getting forced out cos we don't share
their status

But this change is called progress...
by those left with jobs...

So today I stand to ask you, is this the "progress" we want?

Network Rail are evicting the traders from the arches
and the market that made Brixton famous

I'll say that again...

Network Rail are evicting the traders from the arches
and the market that makes Brixton famous

Now this is an attack with many implications

And whether you know it now or not, we're all part of
this equation

With rents being tripled, it's more than a likelihood
That those in our communities are gonna lose
their livelihoods

Chains of big brands will invade and sit back
To reap the rewards that are yours and this land's
(Colonialism...)

Who built Brixton? Who gave it its value?
Was it Starbucks, or was it your grandad and nan too?

What's left in Brixton for the citizens who built it up
Some of whom came here as immigrants and spilled
their guts to build it up?

Nothing.

They're old now, they're cold, they can't afford
their heating

They're alone in their homes with none of their old
friends to meet with

No familiarity, no community support

Some of the most basic things I thought Lambeth
Council would endorse

Brixton's becoming a commercialised, bastardized
shadow of its former self

That sees its people starving in the street despite all
its wealth

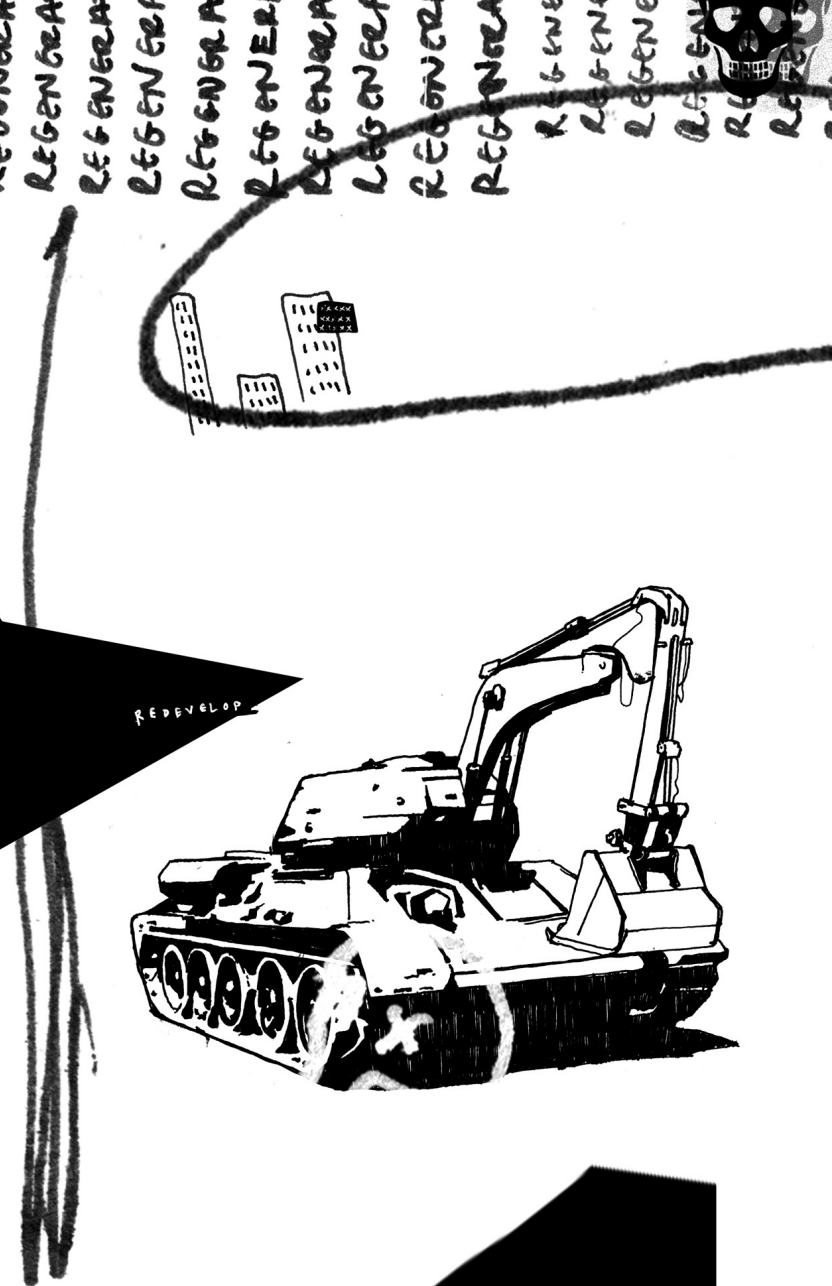
It's serious, and if Network Rail don't listen

They won't just evict the traders,
they'll be evicting Brixton!

So these are some of the reasons we've been marching

To defend our community by defending our Arches

This is our Brixton.



ESTATE OF WAR

If you live in London, there's two words - most recently -
That you will have likely heard more and more frequently:
"Redevelopment" or otherwise known increasingly
as "Regeneration"

Which isn't what it seems to be...

Our councils really love to just regenerate a place!
To elevate a space, to regenerate estates
They're regenerating London in abundance as we speak
But have you ever wondered what these words
actually mean?

I mean, the term "redevelopment" implies a type
of progress
And the council make it sound like a beneficial process
Which has to make you wonder why there's been so
many protests
Against regeneration on estates, it makes no sense
(Until you look at the evidence from
previous developments

And find that none of these “benefits” actually benefit the residents)

You see, when they redevelop homes they also redevelop rent

When they redevelop rent, then we develop debt

We get evicted and shifted out of ends

When they redevelop bricks, we have to redevelop friends

Maybe you thought you knew what ‘redevelop’ meant

But if you believe that we develop, please develop sense

You’d better fight for us or you’ll be redeveloped next

And then we’ll all be redeveloped til we’re redeveloped dead

You could be a sister, a neighbour, a parent, a mother

A carer, a saviour, a friend or a brother

They couldn’t care if you bled in the gutter

You could be dead, cos to them you’re a number

To them, you’re just the amount of money that they can sell your home for.

Like:

“Good afternoon £800,000,

How are you, £800,000?

I hope this letter finds you well. ...it’s worth £800,000

I’m writing about your property, I’m sorry but you’ve got to leave

You’ll be on the street but to me, £800,000

It’s the sound of progress, it’s a scary process but council always know best

Please, £800,000

*Think of all the other houses we could build when yours is down
(And we could get them forking out around £800,000)*

But you can come back... for £800,000

But please don’t be sad if you lack £800,000

Because whenever you’re feeling down and out

Or looking for money down the couch

Remember that to me, you’re worth... £800,000.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Matthew Bennett.”

But Matthew Bennett’s a big man,
plus there’s big plans in the pipeline

Our tube will get a nightline,
the food is getting quite fine

Everybody wants to live in Brixton, it's the high life!
So smashing our homes to dust has come just at the
right time...

Now, admittedly I've got a biased background
I've stood and seen my best friends have their houses
smashed down
I'm already angry, and anger clouds reality
So let me detach myself and just look at the "facts" now:

Cressingham Gardens Estate. South West London
Three hundred houses and the council wanna crush them
Each house has around a three person count
So that's 900 people who stand to lose their house

The council explain that the estate needs work
And over one third of properties need a refurb
(Because they left them to decline, which happens all the
time. You'll be quite surprised if you do some research)

Now a full refurb will cost 7 mil - it's nothing
But the council have announced that they can't
afford that
(Despite having received a hundred million pounds in
funding

And despite having collected rent for forty years
before that)

So, instead of spending 7 million on refurbishments
Which they've already said they have available now
They wanna smash the houses down, build around the
same amount
And that's gonna cost £110 million

But according to the council, this all makes sense
Cos they intend to build 27 extra homes at council rents

Hahaha, yeah -
They wanna spend £110m, on 27 extra houses
While there's a housing crisis and the waiting list
has thousands
That's not efficient or sufficient, why do we allow it
When it only serves to benefit developers and councillors?

But you know what... even if residents could afford to
move back
What makes the council think they'd even want these
new flats?
Not everything that's new is necessarily improved

The council just assume that they'd even wanna do that

They forget that in these homes people raised
their families

These walls have shared their happiness and faced their
every tragedy

They forget that a home is a community, a neighbourhood
And no amount of "new" could make me feel the way
my neighbours could

They forget that - the difference between a home
and house

That a house can't be made a home for any one amount

They forget about the elderly who've spent their whole
lives here

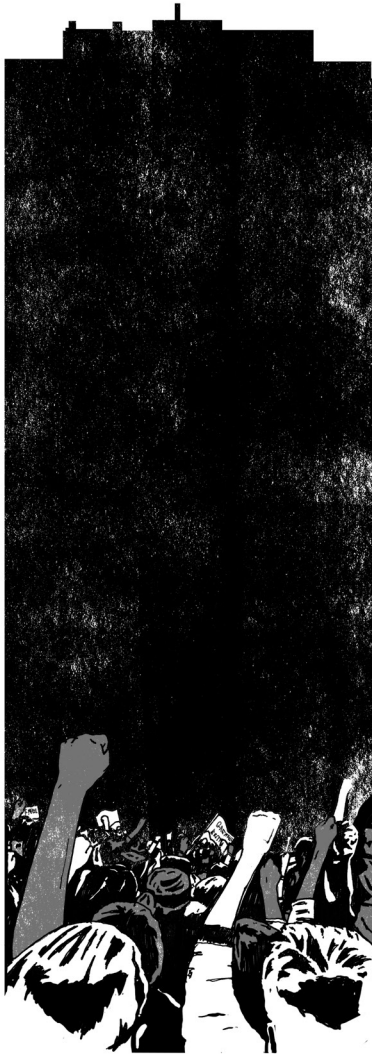
They've got a right to stay here, they've got a right to
die here

It's sad to be said, but it has to make you wonder
Whether they "forget" or just care more about a
number...

Maybe you thought you knew what 'redevelop' meant
But if you believe that we develop, please develop sense

You'd better fight for us, or you'll be redeveloped next
And then we'll all be redeveloped til we're
redeveloped dead.

We just want a place to live, that's what our estates are for
It's time to fight, to try and survive.
We're living in estate of war.



GRENFELL BRITAIN

What happened at Grenfell, that was an act of war
The murder of innocent people who died because
they're poor
Hundreds of deaths and you can bet that there'll be more
So if you think that you survived it, I wouldn't be so sure

Maybe you thought you knew what redevelop-meant
But if you believe that we develop, please develop sense
If you live in social housing you'll be redeveloped next
And then we'll all be redeveloped 'til we're
redeveloped dead

Cos what happened at Grenfell, that wasn't just "tragic"
It was a deliberate attack, it was managed
The people want justice and trust me they'll have it
And part of that is asking how and why this happened

So to start, the fire alarms weren't active
There was no second staircase for fire exit access
No sprinklers fitted when the renovation happened

There was no access for fire trucks
But there was the cladding..

The cladding wasn't safe but they chose it cos it's cheaper
(only by £2 for every square meter)
That cladding was the reason that the building burnt
so quick
But they still chose it cos people's lives aren't worth shit

So now we've established some of how it happened
It's time to examine who approved that use of cladding

The cladding, at the start, came from Omnis Exterior
Who, when they sold it, will have known it was inferior
Harley Facades bought it and installed it for Rydon,
the lead contractor in the process that supplied them
Rydon worked directly for KCTMO, the TMO
managed the tower for the Council
The Council owned the building, well,
as far as we all know...

So I'd say the Council is one of those accountable

They're accountable, cos people gave them warnings
All formal avenues to change had been exhausted

There's proof that Grenfell Action Group offered them
a multitude of warnings which they'd sent to them for
years before this

This *is* war and it's time to take your gloves off
If you want revenge there's many names to get your
tongues on
Very many companies and many hands with blood on
But we won't let any of them devils pass the buck on

Let's focus our attention on those companies I mentioned
Sit them down, surround them, and ask them
these questions:

1. Did any of them raise any concerns, and if so
who did they raise the concerns to?
2. Did any of them receive concerns, and if so how
did they act on what they knew?

These are key questions in the investigation
And suspects need to evidence their answers,
to the nation
They need to be able to back up every single explanation
And if they're found guilty in this investigation
I don't wanna see resignation or fines

They need to go to jail for a very long time

But right now, while the victims grieve

Those whose representatives left them on the street

We've seen a huge community meet their
immediate needs

And now they need housing, with instant guarantees

There's 1400 empty homes in Kensington

While homeless people beg for them - that's negligence

The government should buy them all and turn them
into Council stock

Then they should supply them all and keep them all at
Council costs

We need local, social housing for the victims

Not in hotels, real places they can live in

Long term homes that are safe for kids and women

And then we need a Needs Fund to cover their
basic living

For clothing

For school uniforms to be replaced

For every single funeral, respecting every faith

For new official documents, licenses and passports

For food, for travel, for anything they ask for

And everything they need, like foster parents for
the orphans

All workers need their jobs and pensions protected

Undocumented people also need to be supported

And students with exams need their
circumstance respected

Then whilst we're doing that,
we need to look at your housing

If you're living on a block,
your block is one of four thousand

Are you at risk too? Is your family next?

Well May ordered tests and the tests said *yes*.

If you're at risk right now, organise a rent strike

Don't pay a penny 'til your landlord protects your life

I'll say that again, you need to organise a rent strike

Don't pay a penny until your landlord protects your life

And don't let them try to demolish your estate

They'll use this to justify it, saying you're not safe

They've been doing it for years, they did it to my mates

And Estate Regeneration isn't what it says

They'll smash down your home

You'll get dashed out and cashed in

You'll be on the street in a click, it happens that quick

You won't be on fire but your life will be in ashes

So tell them they should refurb and don't let them
chat shit

So we've established some of what to do next

We'll need a lot of money to take the next few steps

I can hear the Tories ask where we'll get the funds from

Well, thanks for asking, I'll tell you where it comes from

Amazon, Apple, Google, E.on, Ebay

They pay less tax than even you and me pay

Every year they avoid billions in tax

So I say we take every pound of that

And then we make them pay their tax every year,
the murderers

They're one of the reasons that Grenfell happened

The government say there's no money for our services

But there's no money cos they never pay their taxes

It wasn't just Grenfell that suffered mass victims

Every single day we're seeing Grenfell killings

We suffer to corruption in a Grenfell system

This isn't Great Britain, this is Grenfell Britain

The disabled are on fire

They're burning the workers

The elderly are choking

Your teachers are in hearses

Students are on fire next to doctors and nurses

Your hospitals, even your fire station's burning

You don't need to be an expert to work out the remedy

Stop cutting funds and instead cut austerity

I'm not an expert but it doesn't seem hard

I can only speak for me, but I'd suggest these demands:

All tower blocks need sprinklers fitted

With fire alarms, on integrated systems

We need compulsory, yearly, fire risk assessments

(Cos at the moment, they only recommend them)

Inspections should be undertaken by the fire service

Not by the TMO, this is their downfall
 All TMO's should be instantly dissolved and
 accountability should return to the council

No more self certifying safety checks
 (Anyone could do a week and take these tests)

There should be a second staircase,
 with instant application
 And then we need to vote that homes
 be fit for habitation...

Then of course we need a change to housing regulations
 Recommendations should be legal obligations
 And the regs need to have retrospective application
 Cos most social housing was built before they came in

Then reinstate legal aid, perhaps the worst injustice
 They put a price on life, don't let them put a price
 on justice

Their screams are burnt into our minds and their names
 into our hearts

The fire might be out, but a rage has been sparked
 It's a rage that will blaze on every street, with every march

There won't be a day of peace until justice comes to pass

It wasn't just Grenfell that suffered mass victims
 Every single day we're seeing Grenfell killings
 We're suffering corruption in a Grenfell system
 This isn't Great Britain, this is Grenfell Britain



THE RHYMING GUIDE TO VOTING

I see people banging on, saying that you need to vote
Telling you they're disappointed, how they "can't
believe you won't"

Sending you links to videos that tell you facts you
"need to know"

But you don't plan to vote, and I'm gonna tell them
why you don't

Cos the truth is, every politician is the same
Money hungry liars who enjoy a life of fame

They promised this and promised that,
they sold us all a dream

And then they did the opposite,
got rich and went to leave

They were supposed to represent us, but is that really
what they did?

Tell me the last prime minister who didn't represent
the rich

It's not as if we want a saint, we never needed much

But how can we vote for people that we don't even trust?!

Plus, even if we did vote, it's all been pre-decided
The whole thing is fixed by the people who designed it
Those people at the very top will choose whoever they
like but people still wanna spend their time pretending
they can try and fight it

The more I see the more it seems we need a revolution
Despite this, most people choose to "play the game"
Instead of getting on with it and being the solution
They attempt to use the system to try and make a change

They choose their favourite party and then become
a member

Or try to get selected, to get to the top
To get to be in power, then change the world for better
And now, with Corbyn, we can see if that works
... or not.

This is the election when "playing the game" could stop
This is the election you could prove the system's wrong
You could prove it with one piece of paper
I reckon you could prove it, by voting. For Labour.

Hahaha

Now I know that some of you might think that I've lost it
So give me just 2 minutes, I'll explain my logic:

I always said, I wouldn't vote if they paid me
That's what I said before Corbyn said he'd pay me...
£10 per hour, when I'm at work. Minimum
So when he said that, I said well that's... flippin brilliant!

If the minimum wage is raised to £10 an hour
And right now you work 40 hours a week
Then every single month, if Corbyn gets to power
You'll earn £1,300, after tax, at least

Then of course he plans to stop zero hour contracts
So your boss will have to give you work, if you say you
want that
You'd be guaranteed a set amount of hours working,
for certain

Cos what's the point of jobs if you can't work them?

But also, what's the point of work without a place to
stay and rest?

Workers can't afford a home and landlords keep on
raising rents

But housing is a human right, we shouldn't just accept that
And that's why Corbyn will introduce a rent cap

Then that leads to less homeless on the streets
If you're a student, he'll scrap all your fees
He'll fund green energy and smash our climate tests
He'll cut austerity and get us back our NHS

Corbyn's been like one of us, for thirty years and more
He's proved it in the Commons, on the street and in
the courts
He stood beside the people, the workers and the poor
And more he's always opposed the Right whenever they
tried to go to war

Many on the left would say that he's the best we've had
That he's the best we've got now, that he's the best
we'll have
He murked the game and worked his way further than
ever expected
And now he's an inch away from getting elected...

So if - after all of this - he still doesn't make it
Whether he loses cos the media's against him
Whether he wins and his own MP's betray him

For whatever reason, if he can't deliver changes

Then at least we'll know, that you can't beat the game
That the system can't reform, that it needs to be replaced
If we all vote for him, and still there's no solutions
Then we'd know - for sure - that we need a revolution

At that stage our future would depend on our reaction
Lay down and die or find new tactics
Break down and cry or design new actions
Atomise or strategize and amalgamate factions

Maybe a loss would kill the left as we know it
Maybe a loss would be a chance to spark new approaches
But not as opposition, not within this system
Maybe we could rise for real and reinvent resistance

But whether he wins or loses, I'll still remain active
The power always has been and will be with the masses

I build my own future, I don't have a master
I've just got a vote and the chance to get an answer.

That's why I'm voting for Corbyn.





£7